

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING FINAL MEETING MINUTES

February 3, 2015

**Location: Wilton Town Hall: Court Room
7:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Cary Hughes Chair, Don Davidson Vice Chair, Betsy Castro, Harry Dailey, Joyce Fisk, Donna Pucciarello, Caitlin Maki, Joe Torre, and Dawn Tuomala, Secretary, William Condra (Selectmen's Rep.)

See attached sign in sheet for others in attendance.

1. Chairman Hughes called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Chairman Hughes welcomed everyone to the meeting tonight. Tonight there will be a presentation of the operating budget, then public comment, followed by the presentation of the warrant articles followed by public comment. We will then look at any changes that need to be made. The Committee is open to listening to what the public comments are and then to decide based upon the merits of the case.

This year the Town Meeting can't be held at FRES as it is still under construction; therefore the Town Meeting will be held at the high school instead.

2. Presentation of the Final Budget

Chairman Hughes started by presenting the 2015 operating budget in the various sections. The first section is General Government and he highlighted several different areas and explained why they have had increases. The items within this section are town office expenses, police retirement fees, planning board, zoning board, maintenance of the Town Hall building, the benefit package for the employees, various insurances, and FICA. Insurance items have increased the most.

The next section is Public Safety which consists of the Police Department, the Ambulance, and the Fire Department along with emergency management and Building Inspection. Ambulance has an increase and the Fire Department is down. Emergency management has an increase due to the purchase of a computer. MACC Base communications has increased due to the investment in consoles. An accounting of hydrants was made resulting in a decrease in rental costs.

The next section is Highways and Streets which include Highway Maintenance, Resurfacing and street lighting which is down.

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2015

The next section is Sanitation and Water which includes the Recycling Center along with the Sewer Department and the Wilton Water Works Commission. The Recycling Center has other Towns that contribute to the center helping to reduce the costs. Sewer and Water also have income from the rate users.

The next section is Health which includes a number of organizations; they receive money for services that they supply to some of the people of Wilton. The next section is Welfare which has been increased slightly over last year. This section includes Aid to Disabled St. Joseph's which is also known as Meals on Wheels; a full accounting of their expenses was received. They provide an additional service to the recipients by default. They send someone to bring the meal go the homebound individuals so the workers are checking on the people daily making sure they are still well. The newest service is the Souhegan Valley Blue Bus which provides rides to the elderly and disabled that need it. They charge a nominal fee for each ride. This service was started part way through last year, the Lions Club and the Milford Rotary Club picked up the expenses for last year.

The next section is Culture and Recreation which includes Parks and Playgrounds, the Library, Goss Park and the Conservation Commission. Goss Park has a much larger budget but asks for a contribution from the Town to help support them. Heritage, Main Street and the Community Center are also included in this section. The Library has an increase for several reasons; salary increases, retirement costs and they have been challenged with water. Goss Park has had extra expenses due in part to a change in a volunteer position to a paid position. They also have drainage issues from the parking lot and have had an increase in insurances. Lyndeborough shares a part and pays a portion of the costs.

Chairman Hughes stated that the revenues have been conservatively estimated offsetting the Operating Expenses. The final Operational Budget with all of the above changes is \$4,776,056. This is up 2.75% from last year; there is a difference of \$127,967 between the 2 years. This year includes a 3% increase in wages which was discussed throughout the entire budget process this year. These budgets contain necessary expenses as each department is cut as close to the bone as possible without disrupting service to the public.

3. Public Comments/Questions - None at this time.

Capital Outlay

The Capital Outlay section is where the Capital Expenditures are placed. This year, as a result of an energy audit, the heating system and other energy related repairs were reviewed so as to look after longevity for the Town Hall and increasing its performance. This is the year for a new police cruiser and a new highway truck. Equipment requested is a new power stretcher for the 2007 ambulance to match the new ambulance. The Fire Department requires replacement of an Air Breathing Compressor.

The Library is having serious drainage problems that are creating flooding issues in the basement level. The lower floor will soon be unusable until the work is done. They plan to put in new drainage around the exterior of the building and seal the foundation. There is a contingency fund of \$17,000 that is needed in case ledge is encountered during the excavation and installation of drainage pipe. The pipe will then connect into the Town's drainage system in the street.

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2015

There was an appeal made to the Selectmen to not use any of the Capital Reserve Funds for the Library since there will need to be roof repairs, that will need to be done sooner rather than later. There needs to be more money put into the Capital Reserve fund.

There will also be interest money taken out of the Fire Station Renovation/Addition Capital Reserve Fund, closing out that account. This brings the Capital Outlay expenditures at \$289,736; a number of the items will be supported by money coming out of Capital Reserve accounts and the remaining amounts out of taxation.

The Ambulance will need replace 2 cardiac monitors in the future so money is being set aside to be able to purchase them when needed. The State is mandating a revaluation of the Town in 2016, half of the amount is being set aside this year and the rest next year. The Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) has been used to see what vehicles are coming up for replacement in the future years. There are a couple of Fire Trucks and a loader and backhoe that will be needed by the Highway Department. Neither Department has anything in their capital reserve funds. These funds need to be increased so that the tax rate won't spike due to capital equipment purchases. There is a difference of \$533,506 between last year requests and this year.

The revenues have been set by the Selectmen, who finalized them last night. Chairman Hughes went through each section describing the differences from the previous year. The bottom line is the total taxes to be raised \$2,877,039,

Public Comments:

Mr. Dailey stated just for clarification that this is the first time we have seen the income figures. The sheet takes the budgeted values from last year and not the actual expenses spent. There is an extra \$250,000 that had to be raised. Therefore the difference is \$320,000 to make up on top of this.

Mr. Greene, treasurer, stated that the opposite is actually true. The less you spend then you get a cushion back that goes into the General Fund. This money can then be used to offset the taxes for the next year. Therefore the surplus is working to the advantage and the Selectmen will use part of that money, within the State guidelines, while maintaining what level of the surplus there is supposed to be. This is a commitment that the Selectmen have made and more than likely continue to do in the future.

There is on large difference in the school district, in that they aren't allowed to keep their unexpended fund balance and that it is returned to the Towns in the same percentage it was obtained from. The School District then has a zero balance in the bank to begin the year. The Town is allowed to use their balance to drop the tax rate and they can deposit the surplus.

4. Presentation of the Warrant Articles

Article 4 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty eight thousand three dollars (\$58,773) for the Wilton Town Hall to make health and safety improvements, including indoor air quality, improve building durability, and save electricity and fuel expenses and to provide a design plan for future upgrades of the

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2015

heating and ventilation systems and to authorize the withdrawal of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) from the Town Hall Repair Project Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The balance of thirty eight thousand seven hundred seventy three dollars (\$38,773) is to come from general taxation, or to take any other action relating thereto. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2017 whichever is sooner.

Discussion: Mr. Torre stated that the amount coming out of the Library Capital Reserve account is not enough. Mr. Dailey stated that this money doesn't have a very specific purpose. Mr. Torre explained that there isn't enough interest made on the money and that the inflation will make the value of the dollar spent next year even less therefore this should be spent this year.

Ms. Castro, is one of the Trustees of Trust Funds, stated that the funds in all of the reserve funds have been drawn down to a point where there isn't much to invest at this time. The point is to put money in so that there won't be a 20% spike in the tax rate like there was a number of years ago. When there is money to invest, money can be made to better inflation costs.

Motion was made to recommend Article 4 to purchase the Town Hall Improvements for \$58,773 by Ms. Castro seconded by Mr. Torre. 6 in favor; 2 opposed (Mr. Torre, Mr. Dailey); motion passes.

Article 5 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of nine thousand two hundred thirty dollars (\$9,230) for installation of handicapped landing, ramp and railings to access the handicapped door in the Wilton Town Hall and to authorize the withdrawal of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) from the Town Hall Repair Project Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The balance of four thousand two hundred thirty dollars (\$4,230) is to come from general taxation, or to take any other action relating thereto. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2017 whichever is sooner.

Discussion: Mr. Condra stated that it came to their attention that there is a need for an ADA compliant ramp on the exterior of the Town hall. The inside ramp is compliant but on the exterior there needs to be a level landing area in front of the handicapped door then a ramp to the sidewalk to enable better access. There will need to be concrete work done and cutting down of the granite slab. Work will include raising the area approximately 8 inches or more. There will be railings and a ramp to get down to the sidewalk. If nothing is done than it can stay as it is but when a change is made it will have to be ADA compliant.

Mr. Donovan stated that the landing and ramp will be useless unless there is an automatic door. Mr. Elliott explained that they only had 3 days to put the estimate together and there wasn't enough time to obtain a price on the door installation. This could be raised on the floor at Town Meeting and added to the warrant. There doesn't seem to be any sense in doing the project if there isn't an automatic door installed as well. This appears to be necessary and that the ramp will be functional but the power door will be a tremendous help.

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2015

Motion was made to recommend Article 5 to install ADA Handicapped access to the Town Hall for \$9,230 by Ms. Castro; seconded by Mr. Torre; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 6 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty three thousand six hundred and five dollars (\$43,605) for the purchase of a new police cruiser. Costs to include purchase, equipping and lettering of the car and to authorize the withdrawal of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) from the Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The balance of thirty three thousand six hundred five dollars (\$33,605) is to come from general taxation, or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: None

Motion was made to recommend Article 6 purchasing the Police Cruiser for \$43,605 by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; 7 in favor; 1 opposed; motion passes.

Article 7 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty one thousand dollars (\$31,000) for drainage repairs to the foundation and surrounding area of the Library and to connect the Library drainage to the existing municipal storm drainage system and to authorize the withdrawal of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) from the Library Renovations & Repair Capital Reserve Fund. The balance of twenty one thousand dollars (\$21,000) is to come from general taxation, or to take any other action relating thereto. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2017 whichever is sooner.

Discussion: Mr. Brown from the Library stated that due to the drainage issues the lower level has been closed. The Library Capital Reserve account was stated 4 to 5 years ago with the thought of repairing the roof. The roof is only slightly younger than FRES which had their roof replaced a couple of years ago. There is erosion on the slate roof and the copper in the valleys need to be replaced. This is a major renovation and they have had a verbal estimate in the neighborhood of \$900,000 to do all of the repairs. To replace the roof with glass would cost about \$600,000. Both of these estimates might be high but the hopes were to build up the capital reserve fund so that it will lessen the overall impact of the very large expenditure.

Mr. Brown continued stating that the second part to having a Capital Reserve Fund shows that the Town is committed to helping. The Library is always looking for grants to help with the improvement costs, many of the organizations like LCHIP look to see what the Town's commitment is. In this particular case the Capital Reserve account is meant for a long term commitment and not a regular purchase to come out of a Capital outlay like other departments. We need to keep the building being useful and in good repair.

Motion was made to recommend Article 7 for the drainage repairs to the Library by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; 7 in favor; 1 opposed (Mr. Torre); motion passes.

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2015

Article 8 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventeen thousand dollars (\$17,000) for blasting of ledge and for foundation repairs. The monies to come from general taxation or to take any other action relating thereto. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by December 31, 2017 whichever is sooner.

Discussion: Chairman Hughes stated that the motion needs to be changed to reflect that this is also being used for the Library. We can't see what is underground and we need to have a contingency fund for unanticipated issues that might arise. If it is not needed, then it won't be spent.

Motion was made to recommend Article 8 for the blasting of ledge and for foundation repairs for \$17,000 by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; 7 in favor; 1 opposed (Mr. Torre); motion passes.

Article 9 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventy three thousand three hundred fifty four dollars (\$73,354) for the purchase of an F-550 1 ton pickup and equipment for the Highway Department. Monies to come from general taxation or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: none

Motion was made to recommend Article 9 for the purchase an F-550 1 ton pickup truck and equipment for the Highway Department by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 10 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of nineteen thousand dollars (\$19,000) to purchase a Stryker Power Pro Stretcher for the 2007 ambulance. Ten thousand four hundred fifty dollars (\$10,450) to come from general taxation and contingent upon Lyndeborough to raise, appropriate and pay four thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$4,750) and contingent upon Temple to raise, appropriate and pay three thousand eight hundred dollars (\$3,800), or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: The stretcher has a load capacity of 750 pounds.

Motion was made to recommend Article 10 for the purchase of a Stryker Power Pro Stretcher for \$19,000 by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 11 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty six thousand dollars (\$36,000) for the purpose of acquiring an Air Breathing Compressor for the Fire Department. The monies to come from general taxation, or to take any other action relating thereto.

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2015

Discussion: Chief Dick stated that this is needed to replace the one that has been in service for the last 23 years and they can't get parts for it any more. Plus with this purchase they will bring it up to the current standards (so that if it explodes it will stay within the unit and not harm the personnel trying to fill the container).

Motion was made to recommend Article 11 for the purchase of an Air Breathing Compressor for the Fire Department by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 12 - To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the Fire Station Renovation/Addition Capital Reserve Fund previously established in the year 2003. Fund balance as of 12/31/2014 was one thousand seven hundred seventy four dollars and seventeen cents (\$1,774.17). Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the general fund or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: This is a cleaning out of the Capital Reserve Fund account since there won't be any more additions to fire station in the foreseeable future.

Motion was made to recommend Article 12 for discontinuing the Fire Station Renovation/Addition Capital Reserve Fund for \$1,774.17 by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 13 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty two thousand, dollars (\$32,000) to be added to the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the future purchase of two cardiac monitors. Twenty two thousand dollars (\$22,000) to come from general taxation and contingent upon Lyndeborough to raise, appropriate and pay ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: Chief Zirpolo described what the monitor does which also includes checking oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the blood. The monitor was purchased in 2009 and in the year 2016 we won't be able to get parts for them anymore. If one breaks we will have the money in a Capital Reserve Fund instead of trying to raise all of it at the same time. The total cost of the two monitors in the year 2020 will be about \$80,000.

Motion was made to recommend Article 13 for appropriating \$32,000 to be added to the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 14 – To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of funding a Town Revaluation pursuant to RSA 35:1 and to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be placed in said Town Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund. The monies to come from general taxation or to take any other action relating thereto.

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2015

Motion was made to recommend Article 14 for establishing a Town Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund and placing \$15,000 in said fund by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 15 – To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Fire Department Vehicle Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The monies to come from general taxation or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: The Budget Committee had approved a higher number but the Selectmen reduced it at their meeting last night from \$275,000 to \$100,000. Chairman Hughes explained that it is not our number and we can only recommend or not recommend. It should be cautioned not following the CIP plan that we will have to come up with a greater amount next year or we will have to pay for it all directly out of pocket. The next truck to be replaced is engine 3 at \$550,000, after engine 3 is purchased then we will be a need to replace the ladder truck for an estimated \$800,000.

Motion was made to recommend Article 15 to place \$100,000 in the Fire Department Vehicle Equipment Capital Reserve Fund by Ms. Castro seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 16 - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to be added to the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The monies to come from general taxation or to take any other action relating thereto.

Discussion: Chairman Hughes explained that this account was also reduced by \$50,000 last night instead of the suggested \$100,000.

Motion was made to recommend Article 16 to place \$50,000 to be added to the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

Article 18 - To see if the Town will vote to authorize fifty percent (50%) of the Land Use Change tax up to a maximum of twenty thousand (\$20,000) per year to be placed in the Conservation Land Acquisition Fund per RSA 36-A:5, III.

Discussion: Chairman Hughes explained that this is different than what we saw at the last meeting. The Selectmen had a discussion with the Budget Committee's recommendation for 10% and up to \$10,000 per year and this is the result.

Mr. Torre commented that there is no priority of how the purchase of land occurs, there are no checks and balances; under RSA 36A the disbursements shall be authorized by the Conservation Commission vote. They are only required to have a public hearing and then they can make their decision. They do not have a conservation plan and don't have a complete listing of any conservation land. Mr. Hunter stated that they are working on the plan and will be updating the 2009 NRI plan.

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2015

Motion was made by Mr. Torre to have the Town Attorney research who can disperse and not disperse money from the fund; seconded by Mr. Dailey. Motion was withdrawn. Mr. Condra will consult the attorney to get the answers. Mr Dailey would like to see better checks and balances through the process.

Motion was made to recommend Article 18 for up to \$20,000 to be placed in the Land Acquisition Fund by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; move question. 1 in favor; 8 opposed; motion fails; article is not recommended.

Discussion: Mr. Hunter stated that everyone thinks this is going to be a great deal of money but in 2013 there was zero dollars. In the last 5 years there were 2 other years with zero changes. There is concern this will reduce the revenue coming in and that it will affect the tax dollars coming in by reducing revenue.

Article 19- To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four million, seven hundred seventy six thousand fifty six dollars (\$4,776,056) for the general municipal operation for the year 2015 or to take any other action relating thereto. Said sum does not include any of the special or individual articles addressed.

Motion was made to recommend \$4,776,056 for the 2015 General Municipal Operating Budget by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor motion carries unanimously.

Discussion: About this article being at the end of business during Town Meeting. Since it is the largest amount it should be placed first so that there is the largest representation of the body in the beginning of the meeting. Many people leave during the meeting as it gets later. There needs to be complete transparency. The reason for having it at the end is so if items come up during the meeting than the operating budget can be changed without reopening the warrant again when people have already left. The Town Attorney and DRA will be questioned on this to see if there is any law regarding where it should be placed.

5. Public Comments/Questions

Mr. Greene questioned why the Budget Committee didn't recommend or not recommend Articles 17 or 20 because there are monies involved with the Articles. The Budget Committee has never been listed as recommended or not recommended in this type of Article before. It was decided to recommend or not recommend both of them but then to check with the Town Attorney and DRA to make sure. This way we will be covered if we need to vote on these items.

Article 17 - To see if the Town will vote to raise the Optional Veterans' Property Tax Credit (RSA 72:28, II) from two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) to three hundred fifty dollars (\$350) or take any other action relating thereto. (Selectmen recommend this article.)

TOWN OF WILTON BUDGET COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2015

Motion was made to recommend Article 17 by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; Discussion: Mr. Greene there will only be a few thousand dollars reduction by this article. 7 in favor; 1 abstained; motion carries.

Article 20 - To see if the Town will increase the annual property tax credit for qualifying service-connected totally disabled veterans from the standard (present) amount of \$700 to a higher optional amount of \$1,500 pursuant to NH RSA's 72:27-a and 72:35. (By Petition) (Selectmen recommend this article)

Motion was made to recommend Article 17 by Ms. Castro; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; Discussion: There are only 3 people in Town that are affected by this article. All in favor; Motion carries unanimously.

6. January 31, 2015, Review and Approval

Page 8 line 49 "there needs to be a better"

Page 9 lines 9 & 10 "granted \$10,000; in 2014 they were granted \$5,000;"

Motion was made by Ms. Castro to accept the minutes as amended; seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; All in favor; motion passes unanimously.

7. Other Business

Motion was made by Mr. Torre that next year, the Town Hall provide the Budget Committee figures in a more timely manner; seconded by Mr. Condra; Discussion Mr. Dailey questioned the return of money to the towns by reducing the amount that has to be paid towards next year. 6 in favor; 1 opposed; 1 abstained; motion passes

8. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Ms. Castro and seconded by Ms. Pucciarello; all in favor. The Budget Committee was adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Tuomala, Secretary